Religion in World Affairs

Introduction

by Walter A. McDougall

Everyone talks, but hardly anyone thinks or does anything about it. I refer to the upsurge in awareness of religion's impact on international politics, a phenomenon almost as startling as the crackup of the Soviet empire which faith-based movements did so much to promote. In Afghanistan, ragtag *mujaheddin* defied the Red Army and shouted "Allah O Akbar" as their U.S.-supplied Stinger missiles knocked Soviet aircraft out of the sky. In Poland, Lech Walesa placed the Solidarity labor movement under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin, and Pope John Paul II funnelled clandestine support to the Polish resistance.[1] In East Germany, Lutheran churches sheltered dissidents and partly inspired the massive nonviolent demonstrations that brought down the Berlin Wall.[2] And as Librarian of Congress James Billington has recounted, Orthodox clergy and grandmothers stood guard around Boris Yeltsin and the patriots holed up in Moscow's White House, prayerfully imploring the soldiers in tanks to obey a higher law than that of the Communist coup-makers.[3] The witness of religious leaders such as Desmond Tutu and repentant clergy in the Dutch Reformed Church likewise helped to bring down apartheid in South Africa.

On the unhappy side of the ledger, Islamic fundamentalists played the decisive role in the installation of an anti-American theocratic republic in Iran, and continue to stoke the terrorism that frustrates the Arab-Israeli peace process. And since the end of the cold war religious zeal seems to express itself less often in peaceful struggles against tyrannical regimes than in violent assaults against innocent peoples, most tragically in Bosnia and Algeria.

Yet, while foreign policy analysts grant that faith-based political action seems more influential in world affairs today than at any time since the Enlightenment, the University of Pennsylvania library catalog lists a mere seven titles published under the rubric "Religion and International Affairs" in the past

[1] On Afghanistan and Poland, see Peter Schweizer, *Victory: The Reagan Administration's Secret Strategy That Hastened the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1994).

[2] David Steele, "At the Front Lines of the Revolution: East Germany's Churches Give Sanctuary and Succor to the Purveyors of Change," in *Religion: the Missing Dimension of Statecraft*, ed. Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 119–52.

[3] James H. Billington, "The West's Stake in Russia's Future," *Orbis*, Fall 1997, pp. 545–53.

decade.[4] Now, thanks to a grant from Dr. John M. Templeton Jr., the Foreign Policy Research Institute endeavors to encourage more scholarship on this vast and amorphous subject by dedicating this issue of *Orbis* to a survey of the world's major religions in search of their past and potential impact on the behavior of states in the world arena.

Why So Little Is Known

It is not difficult to imagine some of the reasons for the scarcity of literature on religion and international relations. First, very few scholars, much less pundits, theologians, or diplomats, display expertise in both fields. Some have a profound understanding of one or more religious traditions, perhaps also a personal faith, but lack knowledge or experience of the rough and tumble of politics. Others are wise in the ways of statecraft either from analysis or practice, but confess to being out of their depth in spiritual matters. Secondly, a profound disconnect would seem to hamper analysis of the phenomenon for the simple reason that international relations are immanent—an arena of power and conflict over discernible material stakes—whereas religious motivations are transcendent and their impact unpredictable, if not immeasurable. Hence, religion is an unwelcome intruder that confounds rational models of world politics based on balance of power, economic self-interest, or comparative sociology. Conversely, if one accepts on faith a prophetic vision in which Divine Providence, the Mandate of Heaven, or the eternal play of yin and yang is the engine that drives history forward, then the rise and fall of empires, indeed all creaturely struggles for dominion and wealth, are but ephemeral monuments to human vanity hardly in need of explaining at all. How does one make sense of occasions when some people act in this world according to precepts "not of this world"—when, in effect, time and eternity intersect?

A third reason why our otherwise sophisticated civilization has so loose a grip on this subject is that we in the West have misread, or more often nowadays forgotten, our own history. The standard textbook account teaches that religion was central to the international relations of Europe from the Fall of the Roman Empire until the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, when the princes, chastised by the bloody wars of the Reformation, resolved to purge their conflicts of religious passions. The 1555 formula of *cuius regio eius religio* (whoever's domain, his religion prevails) was reaffirmed, and henceforth European states practiced diplomacy according to the secular principle of *raison d'état* (reason of state, or national interest). Political scientists today take this Westphalian

[4] In addition to *Religion: Missing Dimension*, see Wade Clark Roof, ed., *World Order and Religion* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1991); Mark W. Janis, ed., *The Influence of Religion on the Development of International Law* (Dordrecht, Neth.: Nijhoff, 1991); Peter Beyer, *Religion and Globalization* (London: Sage Publications, 1994); Alan Race and Roger Williamson, eds., *True to This Earth: Global Challenges and Transforming Faith* (Rockport, Mass.: Oneworld Press, 1995); Susanne Hoeber Rudolph and James Piscatori, eds., *Transnational Religion and Fading States* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1997); and Marty E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, eds., *Religion, Ethnicity, and Self Identity: Nations in Turmoil* (Hanover, N.H.: University Press of New England, 1997).

system for granted, trace its spread around the world through the agencies of imperialism and decolonization, and wonder if global economics, communications, and concerns such as the environment and weapons of mass destruction are bringing the curtain down on the secular nation-state system.

The textbook account, however, is too pat. To begin with, Europe's so-called religious wars had at least as much to do with normal dynastic rivalry as they did with theology. The Catholic French fought as vigorously against the dominant Catholic Habsburgs as did the Protestant Danes, Swedes, and German princes. Spain and Venice answered the papacy's call for a Christian coalition to contain the Muslim Turks, culminating in the naval victory at Lepanto (1571), but the other Catholic rulers, fearing Spanish power, stayed home. The sixteenth-century "religious wars" in France were civil conflicts among rival claimants to the throne, and the ultimate victor, Henri de Bourbon, happily converted to Catholicism ("Paris is well worth a mass") to placate the majority of his subjects. The Dutch rebellion against Spain (1580–1640) was a war of independence in which some Catholic patriots made common cause with the Protestants. The English Civil War—Cromwell's Presbyterian crusade notwithstanding—began and ended as a political quarrel between crown and parliament. Even the Thirty Years' War in Germany (1618–48) was as much a dispute over how much autonomy the princes of the Holy Roman Empire would enjoy as it was a fight for Germany's soul. To be sure, all sides in these conflicts stoked religious fervor more or less sincerely to rally support, often with savage results. But none was a crusade in the medieval sense.

Nor did religion cease to influence statecraft after Westphalia. Louis XIV, in a fit of folly, revoked the tolerant Edict of Nantes and drove the Protestant Huguenots out of France, thereby enriching those states such as Prussia that welcomed the talented, hard-working Calvinists. France's refusal to permit Huguenots to emigrate to her colonies likewise weakened Quebec and contributed to the British conquest of North America. To be sure, sectarian rivalry played little role in eighteenth-century European diplomacy, but the romantic reaction against the excesses of Reason in the French Revolution restored religious conviction to a prominent place in world affairs. From Alexander I to Nicholas II, Russian tsars repeatedly took fateful initiatives in part because they styled themselves champions of Orthodoxy. English, American, French, and German missionaries scoured the globe for chances to proselytize, thereby determining which of those nations would come to annex Fiji, Hawaii, Tahiti, East Africa, and Indochina, or win spheres of influence in this or that province of China. Napoleon III, even as he fought for the cause of Italian unification, occupied Rome to protect the papacy from the anticlerical Italian nationalists. Bismarck claimed to have undergone an adult conversion (albeit he was said to believe in a God who never disagreed with him), and Gladstone was notorious for subjecting his foreign policy to the test of Christian morality.[5] Gladstone, in fact, was the principal role model for T. Woodrow Wilson.

[5] Gordon A. Craig, "The Christian Statesmen: Bismarck and Gladstone," in *Force and Statecraft. Diplomatic Problems of Our Time*, ed. Craig and Alexander L. George (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), pp. 255–68.

Americans have been especially prone to justify their behavior abroad in Protestant Christian terms, however much they may disagree about what constitutes right and wrong. The fact that most American churches were on board for the Spanish-American War and acquisition of colonies goes far to explain the United States' abrupt shift into self-confident overseas expansion in 1898.[6] When the Truman administration had to justify nuclear armaments and rally Americans to wage the cold war, Reinhold Niebuhr and Bishop Sheen provided the moral theology to reassure the nation. Truman and Eisenhower themselves, not to mention John Foster Dulles, unabashedly defined the cold war as a spiritual contest and invoked God's blessing on their defense of civilization.

In sum, religious zeal was not the sole scourge of European politics before 1648, nor has it suddenly reemerged after the cold war—for the simple fact that it never went entirely away. The interplay of religion and politics has been and remains more complicated than conventional wisdom suggests. In some cases, apparent *religious* conflicts—from early modern times to the Northern Irish and Bosnian strife today—can be interpreted as familiar turf battles in which religious prejudice has played the role of a "force multiplier," inspiring greater zeal and sacrifice from the masses. By the same token, the origins and outcomes of apparent *political* conflicts—from the Crimean and Russo-Japanese wars to the recent war in Afghanistan—were powerfully influenced by religion, with results that astounded the world. It was Napoleon, after all, who recognized that "In war, the moral is to the material as three is to one."[7]

Finally, our notions of history are skewed by the tendency of Western intellectuals to think in dialectical terms. Thus, we set realism and idealism, or secularism and religion, against one another as if they were mutually exclusive. In fact, the most profound students of Christian moral theology from Thomas Aquinas to Niebuhr argued that whatever is "unrealistic" (hence contrary to natural law) cannot by definition be moral! Applied to statecraft, this means that to expect utopian results from diplomacy and war is inevitably to invite immoral consequences—whether the crusade in question is one of self-righteous knights or innocent children led like lambs to the slaughter. Courage borne of religious faith may expand the bounds of the possible, but politics, as Bismarck said, remains the art of the possible. A truly moral approach to statecraft, therefore, takes human nature as it is, respects limits, and acknowledges the contingency of all human creations. It is one that pursues and upholds international order, seeks peace but prepares *in extremis* to fight, practices proportionality of force, receives defeated enemies back into the fold, and is honest and *realistic* about one's own ends and means. For there is no virtue

[6] See the evidence of denomination support for the Spanish war and colonies cited in Walter A. McDougall, *Promised Land, Crusader State: The American Encounter With the World Since 1776* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1997), pp. 112–21.

[7] Robert Debs Heinl, Jr., ed., *Dictionary of Military and Naval Quotations* (Annapolis, Md.: U.S. Naval Institute Press, 1966), p. 196.

in stupidity or dishonesty, however lofty one's motives. Or as Winston Churchill observed, "The high belief in the perfection of man is appropriate in a man of the cloth but not in a prime minister."[8]

This line of thought suggests that the sort of reasonable, restrained balance-of-power system founded in Westphalia, promoted by philosophers such as Hugo Grotius, Samuel Pufendorf, and Immanuel Kant, and nurtured by such hard-headed diplomats as Talleyrand, Metternich, and Palmerston, was not the *antithesis* of a "Christian" politics, but rather the best possible expression of it, especially by contrast to the "religious" wars that preceded it and the even more vicious era of nationalist and ideological wars that followed. Anglican historian Herbert Butterfield made the point presciently in 1954 when he wrote,

> It is better to say that you are fighting for Persian oil than to talk of a "war of righteousness" when you really mean that you believe you have a right to the oil; for you would be conducting an altogether unjust war if for a single moment you believed anything less than this. . . . If you possess an international order . . . you are the party which must refrain from conceiving the ends of war as though you were fighting barbarian hordes entirely outside the system.[9]

What Has Been Ventured So Far

If getting the history right, or at least confronting its ambiguities, is critical, so too is correctly identifying the mysteries and paradoxes of contemporary religious influences on international politics. Happily, we do not start from scratch. In 1991 the American Academy of Arts and Sciences devoted an entire number of its journal *Daedalus* to "Religion and Politics," and three years later a book naming religion "the missing dimension" in diplomacy explored a number of recent case studies. Their authors and editors expended much energy just to persuade readers of the salience of their subject. That, we trust, is no longer needed. But they also introduced many substantive themes and findings, a review of which is the best way to introduce the present volume.

The *Daedalus* survey began by recalling that the reigning sociological theories of the 1950s and 1960s made an implicit assumption (disguised as a conclusion) to the effect that as material forces of progress worked their magic around the world, cultural divides would erode and the First, Second, and Third Worlds would increasingly resemble each other. But "memory and tradition, in fact, are not so easily erased," and "if the world is a village today—a dubious proposition at best—the village is too little known."[10] The most embarrassing prediction made by social scientists from Karl Marx onward was that religion was an atavism from which science and material progress would liberate mankind, and Robert Wuthnow's lead article pinpointed the shortcomings of

[8] James C. Humes, *Churchill: Speaker of the Century* (New York: Stein & Day, 1981), p. 274.

[9] Herbert Butterfield, *Christianity, Diplomacy, and War* (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1954), p. 96.

[10] Stephen R. Graubard in *Daedalus*, Summer 1991, pp. vii–viii.

the theories that belittled the role of religion in world affairs. The first, modernization theory, is built on Max Weber's observations about the *Entzauberung* (disenchantment, or profanation) of modern life as science, medicine, and state bureaucracies took over the epistemological, psychic, and social duties previously performed by religious institutions. In functional terms, modern society had no "use" anymore for religion, hence it was bound to disappear as the democratization and secularization that inevitably flowed from industrialization and urbanization spread from Europe and America to Third World countries. Perversely, religion did not disappear, and not least in the United States, the most "modern" nation of all. Faced with such evidence, modernization theorists concocted such an array of exceptions, countertrends, special cases, and the like, that their model came to resemble the "late Ptolemaic conceptions of the solar system . . . a profusion of ad hoc arguments."[11] To be sure, a sharp decline in religious observance has characterized most of Europe, but that such a decline is inevitable clearly is false.

A second school accounted for the persistence of religion by making it a dependent variable. These "world system" theorists criticized modernizationists for treating countries as discrete units when in fact the trend of capitalism since at least the sixteenth century has been to meld all countries into a single world economy. Neo-Marxist in their approach, historians such as Immanuel Wallerstein described the often traumatic effects that the turbulent and inequitable capitalist marketplace has on locales, and interpreted the occasional outbursts of millenarianism and folk revivals to psychological needs borne of a sense of helplessness. That sounded plausible, especially to academics, but the world systematizers, no less than the modernizationists, posited a structuralism that left no room for culture, free will, and genuine religiosity as independent factors in history.

The so-called Frankfurt School of "critical theorists" offered a third theory meant to account for the survival of religion. Led by Jurgen Habermas, it focused on cultural evolution, and invented the notion of the "postmodern" era. In the merely modern industrial era, advanced societies did display the expected retreat of religious influence on politics. But in the postmodern era, precisely because of the alienation brought on by capitalism and bureaucratization, people direct their attention to "quality of life" issues such as the environment and human potential. Thus, a renewed interest in spirituality, whether in traditional or New Age manifestations, is a predictable phase in the evolution of culture—but, the Frankfurt theorists confidently concluded, a phase that is bound to give way over time to a universal humanism based on reason, not superstition.

Wuthnow dismisses these theories because they share the flawed Enlightenment assumption to the effect that individual and collective human behavior can in fact be rationally explained, rendered predictable, and ultimately *controlled*. They permit no role for spirituality as expressed through the charisma of religious leaders or followers, because anyone who purports to act out of

[11] Robert Wuthnow, "Understanding Religion and Politics," *Daedalus*, Summer 1991, pp. 1–20 (5).

religious conviction is ipso facto fooling himself. The alternative, Wuthnow suggests, is to pursue a genuine theory derived from the empirical evidence of "the restructuring of religious belief and institutions." He grants that religious communities are affected by scientific and socioeconomic change, but notes that they react by adjusting, not abandoning, their traditions "because these traditions carry intrinsic meaning."[12] Indeed, dramatic shifts in the *politics* of Iran or the United States may be better explained as effects of *religious* restructuring. One need only contemplate the degree to which the revival called the First Great Awakening helped to inspire the American Revolution, or the Second Awakening the Abolitionist movement, to imagine how a prima facie case can be made.[13]

If tectonic shifts in a people's religious sensibilities help to explain political change, then it would appear that the United States is not unique, in spite of its separation of church and state. That is what N.J. Demerath argues in the next *Daedalus* essay. Every society, he writes, is an "enterprise of faith" of one sort of another. It may be hierocratic, in which the secular state dominates but cloaks itself in spiritual authority, or theocratic, in which the church dominates but cloaks itself in secular authority, or caesaropapist, in which the secular ruler governs both state and religion. Examining cases as varied as Buddhist Thailand, Lutheran Sweden, and the United States, Demerath concludes that both "official" religion and "separation" of church and state are ideal types. In fact, religious hierarchies that enjoy established status almost always suffer as a result of their identification with the state, while virulently secular states invariably provoke the very religious expression they hope to suppress. Countries with the most religious liberty and diversity, such as the United States and Indonesia (!), tend to develop ecumenical "civic religions," betraying yet another anomaly. Their politics oblige leaders to pay lip service to religious conviction by way of legitimating their claim to high office, but also to spurn religious agendas once in office since sectarianism of any sort can be a liability when it comes to governing a diverse population.[14] That is a phenomenon the so-called "Christian Right" in America quadrennially rues.

The other *Daedalus* articles examine specific countries, but some findings have universal validity. For instance, religious people of any tradition cling by definition to concepts of right and wrong that may transcend the laws of their state. Senator William Henry Seward invoked that concept ("There is a higher law. . . .") when he spoke out against the extension of slavery in the 1850s, as do opponents of abortion today. Strikingly, Islamist parties of North Africa made the same sort of appeal in 1990–91 when they *opposed* their governments' support for Kuwait and Saudi Arabia against the predations of Saddam Hussein. "For the ordinary citizen of North Africa, the challenge by ostensibly 'revolutionary' Iraq to the notoriously arrogant, selfish, and inequitable

[12] Ibid., p. 18.

[13] The prima facie case has just been made in Paul Johnson, *A History of the American People* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1997).

[14] N.J. Demerath III, "Religious Capital and Capital Religions," *Daedalus*, Summer 1991, pp. 21–40.

Kuwaiti government was a compelling dramatization of their own grievances against unresponsive, corrupt, and arbitrary rulers."[15] In Islam, as in Christianity, a believer is called to obey God's law and not to conform to the world. In the words of Turkish poet Ismet Ozel, a Marxist convert to Islam: "I did not consider myself a part of the society I was in—but as a candidate for the courageous and uncompromising defense of the cause of the just." What is justice? To that the mystic al-Gazali replied that "this world is seen as a reflection of the unseen world. . . . Whoever abstracts and isolates the outward from the whole is a materialist and whoever abstracts the inward is a spiritualist, while he who joins the two together is catholic, perfect."[16] A pope, imam, and rabbi might agree on that—but few statesmen struggling to resolve disputes through diplomacy would welcome having to take into account the "cause of the just" as defined in the bazaar.

In sum, individuals and religious communities who dare to follow a higher calling may have been responsible for some of the most sublime (as well as most sordid) achievements in history. But insofar as they are *out of control* they not only complicate statecraft, but puncture the modern state's pretense of being "the more reliable interpreter of human nature" and best provider of human needs.[17] Not for nothing is Turkey's fundamentalist political movement today called the Welfare Party.

The authors of *Religion: the Missing Dimension of Statecraft* have a different mission altogether, which is to argue the case for the positive role religious belief can play in resolving political conflicts. Jimmy Carter recalls how he appealed to the common precepts of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in order to win Menachem Begin and Anwar el-Sadat to the Camp David Accords. Having served as a roving peacemaker in his years as former president, Carter calls on religious spokesmen to "exercise their moral authority and mobilize the vast human resources of their communities in the service of peacemaking."[18] This is the clearest statement of the belief that religion, far from dividing mankind, is the surest and perhaps only way of uniting it.

The Carter method, as expressed by editor Douglas Johnston, is not to approach mediation of international disputes with a shrewd eye to the conflicting interests that need to be reconciled, but rather with "an understanding of the emotional stakes of the parties." It is at least as important, he writes, to ask of contesting parties how they feel as what they want. A wizened statesman might laugh at such a proposition—imagine "getting in touch with the feelings" of a Saddam Hussein or Kim Jong-il—but that is the recommended approach. Johnston admits that with the exception of Christians, who are clearly admonished to be peacemakers, it is difficult to find cases in which religiously inspired mediators have helped to resolve conflicts. But he has a point when he urges

[15] Lisa Anderson, "Obligation and Accountability: Islamic Politics in North Africa," *Daedalus*, Summer 1991, pp. 93–112 (108).

[16] Serif Mardin, "The Just and the Unjust," *Daedalus*, Summer 1991, pp. 113–29 (113, 119).

[17] Lamin Serah, "Religion and Politics: Third World Perspectives," *Daedalus*, Summer 1991, pp. 203–18 (215).

[18] Carter in *Religion: Missing Dimension*, p. viii.

diplomats to pay more attention to the "human dimensions" of conflicts rooted as much in history and culture as in power and wealth.[19]

Edward Luttwak, whom none would accuse of romanticism, provides the title essay. He begins by mocking the Enlightenment's dismissal of religion as "barbarism" (in Gibbon's word), and accuses rational social science of prejudice as extreme as that displayed by premodern churches. He then draws on Max Weber's distinction between society and community (*Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft*), noting that even as capitalism and the modern state produce unprecedented wealth they tend to undermine a people's sense of community. That in turn can delegitimize the market and state inasmuch as people are unlikely to welcome new increments to their material well-being at the cost of further erosion of the cultural traditions that give meaning to life. That is a fancy way of saying that "man doth not live by bread alone," or, as the Ayatollah Khomeini put it, that "the masses are naturally drawn to religion"—and not because it is an opiate, but because it is an indispensable medicine for mortal, suffering, souls.[20]

Religion, therefore, is a perennial, but Luttwak shrewdly observes that its utility in international affairs is problematical. For rulers who enlist the religious convictions of their people in a political struggle sacrifice their freedom to maneuver, negotiate, and compromise. On the other hand, Luttwak observes, religiously motivated mediators may succeed in "introducing the authority of religion into the negotiating equation" and thereby win conflicting parties to concessions they could not otherwise make for the reason that the parties would be acceding, not to their enemies, but to some divine principle their people can understand.[21]

Here Luttwak places his finger on the crucial dilemma regarding religion and politics. Tapping religious fervor may be a powerful tactic for a leader embroiled in a conflict, but that very fervor ties his hands when it comes to reaching a settlement. On the other hand, if the leader pursues an apparently amoral realpolitik so as not to incite a "religious war," he risks losing legitimacy in the eyes of his own people. Luttwak concludes that third-party negotiators, whether sectarian or ecumenical/secular (e.g., the United Nations) can theoretically be effective insofar as they introduce a higher authority to which two warring sides may defer without losing face. But the conditions for such interventions are rare and delicate.

The case studies described in the book only demonstrate how marginal such interventions have been. Religious groups attempted to mediate the conflicts in Nicaragua, Nigeria during the Ibo rebellion, Rhodesia during the transition from white rule, and the Philippines during the last days of Ferdinand Marcos. While the authors are at pains to show that the Quakers or other intermediaries "won the parties' trust" or "brought the sides together" in no case did they succeed in resolving the dispute. Luttwak's own case study describes the role

[19] "Introduction: Beyond Power Politics," in *Religion: Missing Dimension*, pp. 3–7 (3).

[20] Khomeini quoted in Barry Rubin, "Religion and International Affairs," in *Religion: Missing Dimension*, pp. 20–34 (21).

[21] Edward Luttwak, "The Missing Dimension," in *Religion: Missing Dimension*, pp. 8–19 (17).

played by the Moral Rearmament Movement in the reconciliation of France and West Germany after World War II, but rightly concludes that the rapprochement proceeded for other powerful reasons, above all fear of the Soviet Union. In the Philippine case, the Catholic Church assuredly helped to delegitimize Marcos, but Filipino politics soon reverted to their corrupt pattern. "We thought [the revolution] was what Exodus was to the Jews," lamented one priest, "but it wasn't. We're back to normal."[22] This is an illustration of the "morning after" problem common to all enthusiastic political movements, and a serious check on the transformative power of religion. Faith may move mountains, but they still cast their shadows.

A final conundrum lies in the "clash of civilizations" manner of perceiving the impact of religion on politics. We tend to assume that theological cleavages are what prevent Christians, Confucians, Muslims, et al., from seeing eye to eye, hence the heavy investment made in the ecumenical movement. If only the world's religions could merge, or at least celebrate the humane principles common to all, then peace might break out. One hero of the ecumenical movement was Gandhi, whose ethic of nonviolent civil disobedience seemed to be a model for a spiritual, but effective and universally applicable politics. What is more, Gandhi was open to all wisdom, whether derived from the Upanishads, Bible, Quran, or Tao, and acted on the Hindu principles that "what appears to be divided is at some level essentially one, and that conflict lies at the level of perception, not of reality."[23]

But the ecumenical movement has failed, not least because its proponents consistently err in separating precept from authority. Perhaps all major religions do teach a variant of the Golden Rule, but if the World Council of Churches, for instance, preaches the moral injunctions taught by religions while jettisoning the supernatural authority behind them, it robs people of the main reason they might be inclined to obey them. What many ecumenicists peddle is really a watered-down humanitarianism that is not religious at all. (As Malcolm Muggeridge quipped, Christianity without the cross is Liberalism.)

Gandhi understood. This proselytizing, he said, "will mean no peace in the world," for what the human race needs is not a syncretic religion, but rather that "Hindus become better Hindus and Mussulmans become better Mussulmans and Christians become better Christians."[24] God, not man, must occupy the center if any politics of decency is to survive. G.K. Chesterton, pondering the roots of American democracy, made the same point: "The Declaration of Independence dogmatically bases all rights on the fact that God *created* all men equal; and it is right; for if they were not created equal, they were certainly *evolved* unequal."[25]

[22] Henry Wooster, "Faith at the Ramparts: the Philippine Catholic Church and the 1986 Revolution," in *Religion: Missing Dimension*, pp. 153–76 (170).

[23] Harvey Cox, "World Religions and Conflict Resolution," in *Religion: Missing Dimension*, pp. 266–82 (270).

[24] Ibid., p. 271.

[25] G. K. Chesterton, *What I Saw in America* (1922; reprint, New York: Da Capo Press, 1968), p. 305 (italics added).

The bottom line, it would seem, is that religions will neither disappear nor merge, cannot be drained out of politics, and ought not to be drained lest the world be rendered defenseless against far more destructive secular totalitarianisms. But insofar as religions remain distinct and inspire obedience, they will continue to make warriors of zealots and martyrs of peacemakers.

In These Pages

The famed political scientist Ken Waltz gave scholars and students the neatest model when he posited three images, or levels of analysis, of international relations.[26] First-image analysis focuses on the policymakers themselves and the influence of their own personalities, ambitions, or ideologies. In the case of authoritarian regimes or democracies led by dynamic statesmen, first-image analysis is indispensable. How can one explain the policies of a Louis XIV, Hitler, or Wilson without reference to the leader's proclivities? Second-image analysis stresses the domestic environment in which policy is shaped, including the impact of politics, economic interests, competing bureaucracies, and parliamentary and public opinion. Second-image analysis is indispensable, especially in modern democratic states. Third-image analysis examines the international environment, the balance of power, and all the threats and opportunities that emerge from beyond a state's borders, compelling or inviting response.

Applying Waltz's model to the impact of religion on foreign affairs we can readily imagine a matrix in which each of his fruitful paths is pursued for each of the world's great religions. In these pages, eight distinguished authors examine the past and present influence of religious traditions on international relations. Arthur Waldron examines Confucianism, Islam, Lamaism, and Christianity as forces in Communist China. "Cappy" Hurst tackles Japan, the Buddhist and Shintō nation in which religion is said to play the least role in politics. Emmanuel Sivan provides a much-needed scholarly account of the "holy war" tradition that is really marginal to the Islamic faith. Edward Lynch reveals the surprising collaboration between Catholic and evangelical reformers in Latin America. John Langan, S.J., volunteers for the most Herculean chore, assessing the history and future of Roman Catholic teaching and practice in world affairs. Michael Radu does the same for Eastern Orthodoxy, and Harvey Sicherman for Judaism and present-day Israel. Finally, James Kurth describes the foreign policy posture, not of evangelicals, whose influence is well-known, but of mainstream American churches in light of what he provocatively terms "the Protestant Deformation."

To paraphrase the *Book of Common Prayer*, we do not presume to come to this table trusting in our own erudition. The place of the gods in the affairs of mortals is the most ineffable and probably oldest object of human curiosity. But we take it up in the belief that Alexander Pope was too curt

[26] Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1979).

when he wrote that "The proper study of mankind is man."[27] The proper study of mankind is man, God, and the relationship between the two. Or, as the great priest, doctor, and skeptical wit Rabelais murmured to those circling his deathbed: "I go in search of the great Perhaps."[28]

[27] *An Essay on Man* (1733–34), ep. 1, line 2.

[28] Cited by Robertson Davies, *The Merry Heart: Reflections on Reading, Writing, and the World of Books* (New York: Viking, 1997), p. 103.